

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 13-302—HB 6703

Judiciary Committee

Appropriations Committee

AN ACT CONCERNING YOUTH VIOLENCE AND GANG ACTIVITY

SUMMARY: This act makes recruiting a minor to participate in a “criminal gang” a criminal offense, which it classifies as a class A misdemeanor (see Table on Penalties).

The act also requires the Judicial Branch’s Court Support Services Division (CSSD), within available resources and in collaboration with certain government and community organizations, to conduct a pilot program in Bridgeport, Hartford, and New Haven. The program must be designed to reduce (1) the number of children and youths who come into contact with the juvenile justice system and (2) recidivism among those who are delinquents. The chief court administrator must submit a report to the Judiciary and Children’s committees by February 1, 2014 describing the pilot program, its findings, and any recommendations for its expansion or continuation.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2013, except the pilot program provision, which is effective July 1, 2013.

RECRUITING A MEMBER OF A CRIMINAL GANG

Under the act, a person is guilty of recruiting a member of a criminal gang when he or she knowingly causes, encourages, solicits, recruits, intimidates, or coerces someone under age 18 to join, participate in, or remain in a criminal gang. This must be done with (1) knowledge that membership or continued membership in the gang is conditioned on committing a criminal act or (2) intent to facilitate the gang’s criminal acts.

The act defines “criminal gang” as a formal or informal organization, association, or group of three or more people that has:

1. as one of its primary activities, committing one or more criminal acts;
2. members who individually or collectively engage or have engaged in one or more criminal acts; and
3. an identifying name, sign, or symbol, or an identifiable leadership or hierarchy.

It defines “criminal act” as conduct constituting a felony or a misdemeanor (other than recruiting a criminal gang member).

PILOT PROGRAM IN HARTFORD, BRIDGEPORT, AND NEW HAVEN

The act requires CSSD probation officers to collaborate with local police departments, federal agencies, youth service bureaus, and community-based service centers that are willing to participate to (1) identify at-risk children and

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youth and those convicted as delinquents and (2) refer them to the pilot program. It applies to children and youth who could be subject to the juvenile court's jurisdiction, generally those ages seven through 17.

The act requires officers and agencies participating in the pilot program to (1) meet formally or informally with at-risk children and youths to inform them of the juvenile justice consequences of violent behavior and criminal possession of deadly weapons and (2) make unannounced visits, including in the evening, to the homes, schools, and workplaces of children and youths whom a probation officer supervises.

Under existing law and the act, a "community-based service center" is a family support center for children and families against whom a complaint has been filed with the Superior Court. The center provides multiple services or access to such services for the purpose of preventing the children and families from having further involvement with the court.

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